



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Vineta. Song. Words from the Schleswig-Holstein Poetry. Composed by Henry Smart.

A CHARMINGLY fresh and melodious song, for a contralto voice. Mr. Smart has, more than any modern vocal writer, the faculty of throwing a grace around a simple theme by an accompaniment, which, whilst it preserves an independent character, never interferes with the flow of the melody. The chain of transient modulations, beginning at the bar marked "poco animato," we must especially point to, as being infinitely beyond anything we are accustomed to meet with in a song of such small pretension; and the return to the original placid subject is exceedingly beautiful. We heartily commend this composition to the notice of all who desire to sing music written by a musician. The poetry is founded upon a tradition that the ruins of Vineta (an ancient town on the Baltic, which was upheaved by an earthquake and swallowed by a flood) are visible on certain days, and the bells audible below the waves.

Exercises and Observations, intended to assist in the Cultivation of the Voice. By Rosario Aspa. 2nd Edition.

Nor the least merit of this book is the unpretending manner in which it is put forth. So many works on singing are heralded with the announcement that every preceding treatise on the subject is utterly wrong, that it is refreshing to find a teacher modestly publishing the result of his own experience, without attacking the experience of others. And it is precisely because he professes so little, that he has done so much. There is nothing startlingly novel either in the observations or the exercises in this book; but all the remarks are sound and judicious; and the examples will be found highly useful to students. The exercises on the shake are written precisely as they always ought to be—ending on the note *above* that on which the shake is made: and we especially admire the manner in which the difficulties previously illustrated and commented upon, are embodied in a melody with variations. We can conscientiously say that this little work, professedly "intended to assist in the cultivation of the voice," will fully accomplish its object. No singer, however, can be formed by a book; and we perfectly agree with our author's observation, that a good master "must be unceasingly attentive, anxious to bring out his pupils' capabilities to the full; quick to check bad habits, and careful to encourage good ones."

LAMBORN COCK, ADDISON AND CO.

The Woman of Samaria. A Sacred Cantata. Composed by William Sterndale Bennett, Mus. Prof. Cantab.

THE success of a new work at the Birmingham Musical Festival is so likely to be materially aided, not only by the excellent manner in which it is invariably submitted to the public, but by the excitement and enthusiasm inseparable from these brilliant meetings, that we are always loth to do more than record our impression of the composition at the time, reserving any more detailed notice for the opportunity afforded us on its publication, of carefully examining and lingering over those many effects which, however much they may have delighted us on a first hearing, must pass away too rapidly to allow of their beauties being fully revealed. Professor Bennett has been in no hurry to force his Cantata into print before he has had time to think on the possibility of improving it; and the result is that it now comes before us as perfect a work as its composer can make it. This is as it should be. A real artist knows that his first thoughts may not always be his best; and when we remember that Mendelssohn, after the production of *Elijah* at the Birmingham Festival, re-wrote a great part of it, and materially altered the form of several of the pieces, we may reasonably accept such an example in proof of the danger of pressing forward the publication of a work before it has been heard, even by the composer himself. As the Cantata now stands, it contains twenty-two pieces. The pianoforte adaptation can of course only give a faint idea

of the rich instrumentation of the very beautiful Introduction in A minor; but it will effectually revive the recollection of the orchestral effect to all who have heard the work in the concert room. The chorale, syncopated so as to appear in even time against the accompaniment in triple time, is exceedingly ingenious; and the instrumental conclusion (returning to the original minor key, after the chorale in the relative major) is most happily conceived. The first chorus, "Blessed be the Lord God," is based on the highest models of sacred choral writing. The subject, commenced by the sopranos, in A major, is afterwards repeated in full vocal harmony; and a new theme, given out by basses and altos in octaves, introduced by a wonderfully fresh modulation into C major, is followed by a return to the original subject, after some beautiful unaccompanied choral phrases on the word "Blessed." The whole of this chorus is thoroughly religious in feeling; and the counterpoint throughout shows that the composer is profoundly impressed with the solid and strict style of the great Church writers. After a short chorus, "For with Thee is the well of life," beautifully descriptive of the words, occurs the soprano solo, "Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?" a well-written air, but scarcely so melodious and effective as most of the solos in the work. The next point of interest is the chorus, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water," which has been composed since the production of the Cantata at the Birmingham Festival. This is, unquestionably, one of the best choruses; and certainly is destined to become the most popular, not only from the effective manner in which the vocal and instrumental parts are combined; but from the bold and joyous subject with which it commences, and which seems to spring spontaneously from the hopeful words to which it is wedded. An extremely beautiful point occurs after a bar of silence, where the alto gives out a placid theme in E minor, ending upon the dominant, which is afterwards repeated by the other voices; and the return of the bright and melodious original subject is as fresh as it is unexpected and beautiful. The contralto air, "O Lord, thou hast searched me out," has already obtained a popularity which renders any notice on our part superfluous; but we may say that Madame Sainton-Dolby, by her exquisite delivery of this solo, has proved that the true religious fervour which has inspired the composer in his setting of the words, will be most faithfully reflected to the listener by an equally pure and unadorned utterance of the notes as they are written. The chorus, "Therefore, they shall come and sing," is a remarkable instance of the possibility of uniting the highest scholarly knowledge with the power of delighting and exciting a mixed audience; for, although a masterly specimen of contrapuntal skill, it has on every representation of the work produced a marked effect upon the listeners; and at Birmingham, by desire of the President, it was encoired. Written in six parts, it contains some fine antiphonal points; and the union of voices on the *forte* passage, "For wheat and for wine," is extremely striking. Even with the pianoforte accompaniment, the instrumental features of this chorus are well preserved; but we have a distinct recollection of some beautiful effects in the orchestra throughout this movement, the *pizzicato* of the strings, and the holding notes of the wind instruments being amongst the most noticeable. The unaccompanied quartet, "God is a spirit," is another addition to the work since its first performance; and although only lately composed, has continually appeared in the programmes of concerts devoted to sacred music. In this quartet, the simple eloquence of the words is heightened by the music with a truth only to be imparted by a composer, who works with that loving appreciation of his subject, without which, it is hopeless to attempt the illustration of a sacred text. After a short chorus, "Who is the image of the invisible God,"—which is accompanied by the organ only, and written in a style befitting the solemn nature of the subject—the chorus, "Come, O Israel," occurs in the key of E flat minor—although only three flats are placed at the signature. The

subject of this chorus is commenced by the tenors and sopranos in octaves, afterwards harmonized; and (with a short episode between) repeated by the tenors, the sopranos joining them after the giving out of the first half of the phrase. After a fine burst, in full harmony, on the words, "Let us walk in the light," the chorus dies off *pianissimo*, with beautiful effect. The next chorus is composed to Keble's words, "Abide with me," and contains three verses, each set in a different manner; the first being given to the sopranos and contraltos; the second to the same voices, with the tenors added, and the last harmonized for the full choir. This, although some may view it as an interpolation, fits very excellently in its place in the Cantata; and, as a piece of quiet part-writing, is most welcome. Following this is a very fine, but brief, chorus in B minor, "How we believe," (remarkable for an excellent treatment of the words throughout, and especially for a beautiful conclusion, in which the voices drop in unison from the dominant to the key-note) and a tenor solo, "His salvation is nigh them that fear Him," the placid nature of which is in excellent contrast with the choral effects which surround it. The chorus, "I will call upon the Lord," is preceded by a reminiscence of the instrumental introduction of the Cantata; and the following, and final chorus, in D major, is a bold and finely wrought fugue, in which the composer has amply shown that in this much-neglected form of composition the most stringent laws of what may be called the "severe" school of writing, may be fully observed without reducing the work to a dry and mechanical piece of musical contrivance. We have said nothing of the recitatives which connect the principal pieces in this work; and may now observe that they are so carefully written, and in many parts assume such importance, as to be in the highest degree interesting. This is especially observable where the words of our Saviour, commencing "Whosoever drinketh of this water," are passionately interrupted by the Woman of Samaria, with the exclamation, "Sir, give me this water."

It will be seen, by our review upon this Cantata, that our high estimate of its merits, on its production at Birmingham, has been confirmed and strengthened by a close and more dispassionate examination of it in its published form. That it is written with an earnest reverence for the subject, is apparent to all who are acquainted with it; and seeing how England is now struggling to assert its musical power to the world, in spite of the apathy and neglect of those whose duty it is to lend it a helping hand, the thanks of all real well-wishers of the art are doubly due to Professor Bennett, for this valuable contribution to the musical wealth of his native country.

Melodies. For the Pianoforte. By T. M. Mudie.

If good music could make its way through the mass of common-place effusions of the day, these "Melodies," written by one of the most sterling artists from the much-abused Royal Academy of Music, would be in the hands of all who desire something beyond mere work for the fingers. There is a refinement about these little pieces, and a completeness of design, which will ensure for them a welcome reception from the most musical listeners. Of the six melodies (two of which are published in each number), we prefer No. 2, "Tranquillity," (a flowing and graceful subject in E major, with an inner syncopated accompaniment); No. 4, "Religioso," (a simple and melodious piece, of small pretence); No. 5, "Romance," (a beautiful "song without words," full of character in the treatment of the accompanying parts), and No. 6, "Spring Song," (a fresh melody, as suggestive as notes can be of flowers and green-fields). The pieces are gracefully dedicated to the composer's fellow-student, Professor Sterndale Bennett.

METZLER AND CO.

Faithless Robin. Ballad. Words by R. M. M. Music by Louisa Gray.

A PRETTY and unaffected melody, the harmony of which appears generally so carefully written that we cannot but

wonder how the unfortunate consecutive fifths between the bass and voice part (in going from the last note of the 11th bar to the first note of the 12th) could ever have been written. In other respects the song is pleasing; and the pedal bass at the conclusion of each verse has a good effect.

Exeter Hall. A Monthly Magazine of Sacred Music. No. 6, vol. 2. July.

THE contents of this number, musically speaking, are quite equal to those we have already seen; but we must protest against the principle of making a pianoforte piece sacred by christening it with a religious title. The "Meditation" called "The Sabbath Eve," by Mr. H. Parker, is a graceful little melody, which may fairly take its place amongst the unpretentious pianoforte pieces of the day; but it has no more to do with Sunday evening than with Monday morning, or Tuesday afternoon; and we feel it a duty to raise our voice against appealing to the taste of those persons who would shrink from playing a heavenly slow movement of Mozart or Beethoven on Sunday, and contentedly linger over Mr. Parker's "Meditation," because it is published in a sacred magazine, and entitled "The Sabbath Eve." There is much to admire in Mr. Hullah's Recit. and Air, "Joy cometh in the morning." It is earnestly written, and well harmonized. A short Hymn, "Lord, to Thee," by Mr. J. W. Elliott, is more truly religious in feeling than Mr. W. F. Taylor's Song, "Holy Spirit," the continual vibrations between the keys of G and E flat scarcely redeeming a somewhat common-place melody. The Prayer from *Mosé in Egitto*, arranged by Louis Engel for the Harmonium, completes the number, which is carefully got up, and accompanied, as usual, with a well-executed illustration.

Metzler and Co's Part-Song Magazine, No. 1.

As appears on the cover of this Magazine, it is not the intention of the publisher to issue a number at stated intervals; but it will generally appear about once a month. The Part-Song in the number before us, "Bright Tulips," by Mr. G. A. Macfarren, is a good specimen of that composer's elegant and fluent writing. Some very excellent remarks on Choral singing, by Mr. Macfarren, materially enhance the value of the work."

Original Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

Sir,—You would greatly oblige me, and I fancy, confer a favour upon the musical public generally, by explaining why a performance at our principal lyrical Theatre, at which, for my sins, I was lately doomed to "assist," should be so entirely inferior to one I heard at a third-rate lyrical Theatre in Paris during the Autumn of last year. For fear you should feel inclined to beg the question, I will take this opportunity of assuring you that it was very inferior, and consequently discreditable to all parties concerned. First of all, the very life-blood was drained from the work, or in plain prose, the whole interest and balance of the Opera was destroyed by the excision of a number of movements bodily, and the curtailment of several others. I ought, perhaps, here to mention that the opera I allude to is the *Romeo and Juliette* of that much abused and little understood Frenchman, Charles Gounod.

It is possible that a certain portion of the cutting was necessitated by the increasing infirmities of the Romeo. If so, the answer is very plain—get another. Can anyone honestly say that the singing of Signor Mario, at the present time, is other than most painful to all listeners? Even Signor Mario, however, cannot be the cause why the *Prologue*, the *Cortège Nuptial*, and the *Épithalame*, are omitted. To any one who has heard the effect of these numbers in their place in the Opera, it seems perfectly incredible that they should have been expunged. Nothing more weird or beautiful in its way has been heard than the *Prologue*. The sudden and unexpected rising of the curtain, discovering the characters grouped in one long thin line, perfectly motionless, the soft unaccompanied chorus, so new and strange, which,